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May 16, 2005

Governor Rick Perry
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711-2428

Dear Governor,

I write to you today to explain that unofficial militia is the wrong answer for problem within federal government jurisdiction and responsibility. The Minuteman Project is headed for the Texas borders, and I feel that their presence will be the recipe for danger, conflict, and increased legal enforcement costs for the federal government.

The *Houston Chronicle* reported on May 12 that the controversial group that began as a month-long engagement along the Arizona border plans to enter Texas to operate its hunt for illegal border crossings. Other media and eyewitnesses have suggested that many of the participants in the Minuteman Project have carried firearms, incited retaliatory measures by gang members, incited more groups to organize in a similar fashion along other American borders, and created a situation that suggests potential constraints on the individual civil rights of undocumented persons.

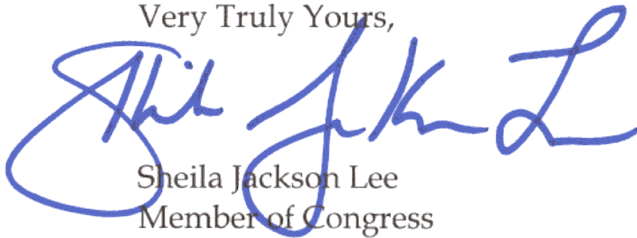
The arrival of this group to Texas is an example of what I feared during its initial engagement during the month of April – propagation in other borders. Empowerment of unofficial, untrained militia to carry out the functions of the federal government instead of simply improving the staffing situation at the Customs and Border Patrol and the Immigration, Customs, and Enforcement

Agencies is a dereliction of duty and a condoning of potential vigilantism. I urge you to disinvite the Minuteman Project to the U.S.-Mexico borders of Texas.

Several differences between the U.S.-Mexico border of Arizona and Texas make it potentially injurious for the arrival of the Minutemen. The traffic growth in Texas would dramatically increase the probability of injury or death of aliens or other innocent civilians. In 2001, U.S. Customs inspectors logged 3,133,619 cargo trucks as they entered Texas border towns from Brownsville to El Paso, up from 1,897,888 commercial vehicles in fiscal year 1995, the year NAFTA took effect. Furthermore, the topography at the Texas borders are more dense and provide more places for people involved in violent disputes to hide.

It is the responsibility of the Federal government to fight illegal immigration. I hope you will consider these views and look into this matter. If I can be of any additional assistance, please contact me personally or my office at 202 225 3816.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sheila Jackson Lee', is written over the typed name and title.

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress